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CONGRESSIONAL COMMENTS RELATING TO THE CIA BUDGET

1. The purpose of this bulletin is to keep employees informed on recent events in the Congress of the United States which affect the Agency.
2. On 4 June 1974 the Senate by a vote of 55 to 33 defeated an amendment to the Defense Procurement Authorization bill (S. 3000) which would have required the Director of Central Intelligence to submit an annual unclassified report to the Congress disclosing the total amount of funds requested in the budget for the National Intelligence Program.
3. A number of Senators, including the Chairman of the Agency's Oversight Committees in the Senate, strongly opposed the amendment on the basis that such disclosures would provide valuable assistance to our adversaries by virtue of the trends disclosed over the years and that the publication of the total figure would only stimulate further inquiry for greater detail on foreign intelligence activities, for explanations of changes or trends, and for the component elements of the total figure.
4. They also pointed out that the four committees charged with oversight of the Agency in the Congress are fully aware of the details of the foreign intelligence budget and inquire into these matters deeply. The point was also made that if any member of the Senate wished to know what the total figure was it would be furnished to him on a classified basis.
5. The discussion on the amendment is covered on pages S. 9601-9613 in the Congressional Record of 4 June 1974. Excerpts follow:

... we are an open society and, so far, we have been able to carry on an intelligence program effectively which has been worth to us billions and billions and billions of dollars in savings. But, if we are going to abandon the idea of keeping these figures from being disclosed, then, in my humble opinion, we might as well abolish the agency. It would be like saying, in effect, that we do not want this secret intelligence after all, that we do not need it, and that we will abandon it.

We will pay an awful price for that. I am familiar with the CIA budget. I can satisfy most any Senator in the cloakroom, talking to him some about this, but I will publicly say that it is a clean budget and they have justified many times over the expenditure of the money. "

Senator Pastore: " We have to know what they are doing. So we can know what we have to do in order to guarantee the security of our own country. So we cannot come out here and tell the whole world, "We spent \$1 billion or \$2 billion for the Central Intelligence Agency." What does that mean to anyone else, except that perhaps some people think they are spending too much. And the minute the question is asked where they are spending it we are in serious trouble.

So what happens to your children and my children, Mr. President? What happens to you when you go home tonight? What happens tomorrow? What happens to the security of our country? Can we afford to tell them? Oh yes, I would like to tell the public everything it is possible to tell them. I believe in that. I have been in public life continually for 40 years. I believe in the right of the public to know. But I certainly would not come to the floor of the Senate and tell you, Mr. President, how to put together an atom bomb. I would not tell you that. I would not tell you how far our nuclear subs are able to travel; I would not tell you how we can detect an enemy sub; and I would not tell you how they might detect ours. I would not tell you that. Why would I not tell you that? I would not tell you that because the minute I told you that I would jeopardize the future of your children.

. . . .
I have sat down with the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. Proxmire), the Senator from California (Mr. Cranston), to find a solution, and I have sat down with Mr. Colby, who is a great American. He said, "Please do not do this. If you want to make my job easier, please do not do this." I cannot sit there after that admonition and exhortation and turn around and say, "Mr. Colby, I do not believe what you have to say." If I believed that for 1 minute, I would say, "You ought to give up your job."

Mr. President, I rise to commend the Senator from Rhode Island and to associate myself fully with his comments. The Senator pointed out very properly that the Central Intelligence Agency has in the past engaged in activities that have been looked upon by certain Members of the Congress as undesirable; but I want to make it clear that every one of those activities had been ordered by a President. The Central Intelligence Agency does not just engage in activities for the love of work. I know that the Central Intelligence Agency, during the Kennedy years and the Johnson years, was engaged in activities in Laos—

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Mr. President, the Central Intelligence Agency is possibly the most important agency in this Government. By and large, it is made up of people who are competent, able, and who have served this country well and faithfully. To be sure, there are times when it has engaged in activities, as we have said, that are looked upon with suspicion; but I think it would be folly for us to publicize all of its activities, to publicize the amounts it receives, particularly when there are ways and means within this body and within the other body of Congress to supervise it and to keep a check rein upon it.

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I had the privilege of serving on the National Security Council, and I want to tell my colleagues that the Central Intelligence Agency was the most accurate and effective instrument of Government for that council. Its reports were most accurate, and had we followed the advice of the Central Intelligence Agency in many areas, we would have been better off, but at least it was there.

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But just as surely as we are in this body today debating whether or not we ought to have a release of the figure, next year it will be whether it is too big or too little, and then it will be what is in it. Then when we start to say what is in it, we are going to have to expose exactly what we have been doing in order to gain information; for example, years ago as to where the Soviet Union was building its nuclear subs and the kind of nuclear subs they were. I saw that material in 1965—how far they were along, what their scientific progress was. I do not think it would serve the public interest for all of that information to have been laid out. It would have destroyed our intelligence gathering completely. . . . "

But, let us bear in mind that if we are to have a security intelligence agency, we cannot have it with national publicity on what it does, how it does it, and how much it spends here, or how much it spends there. . . ."

Senator Stennis: ". . .

On my responsibility to my colleagues, they in CIA keep a clean house. They have had a conservative operation dollar-wise and have accounted for the money in a splendid way. That has been true without exception. There has been no great spillage of money or great extravagances, and not one bit of scandal or odor of any kind. . . ."

Senator Thurmond: ". . .

I believe that our Nation is unique in the attention its legislature has given to specifying and circumscribing the activities of the agency designated to perform its foreign intelligence mission. . . ."

Senator Proxmire: ". . .

Mr. President, the purpose of the amendment which I am offering now is to provide that the overall figure for the intelligence community as a whole, not broken down but the overall figure, would be made available, so that the taxpayers of this country would have some idea of how much, how many billions of dollars—and it is billions of dollars—are going for intelligence efforts by our Government.

. . . .

Now just what would this tell our adversaries? They would not know if it all went to the CIA, or DIA. Whether the NSA spent most of the money, or the Air Force.

How about yearly fluctuations? Say for example, that the budget went up 10 percent in 1 year. What what they conclude? That manpower was more expensive? That the CIA was spending more for Laos? That the DIA had bought a new computer division? That NSA was hiring more people? They would know nothing. . . ."

The threat will come from losing control on the inside. If maintaining that control requires an ounce of risk, then I think we should be prepared to take that ounce of risk in at least letting us see publicly and the people see publicly whether we are spending \$3 billion, \$7 billion, or \$90 billion, and how we are concealing it and hiding it, and if we are protecting ourselves from the inside as well as from the outside.

I think that ounce of risk, if it exists, is worth taking, and I thank the distinguished Senator from Wisconsin for yielding. . . . "

Senator Jackson: ". . .

In summary, our foreign intelligence service arises out of an act of Congress and all of its activities are closely scrutinized by a number of representative members of both the Senate and the House of Representatives. This is how we have resolved the balance between the needs of an open society and the needs for a secret foreign intelligence service. I certainly do not think that this is the time to unbalance the situation as I am confident enactment of the proposed amendment would do.

Senator Young: ". . .

I know there is great interest in the public knowing everything possible, but I think there are some things that should be kept secret for our own security. "

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